

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-07

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R 231757Z SEP 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

INFO CINCPAC FOR POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 236183

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, MU

SUBJECT: AL-GHAZALI INTEREST IN NAVAL SURVEY TEAM

REFERENCE: MUSCAT 1063 (NOTAL)

1. IN CALLS ON STATE AND DOD OFFICIALS, CHIEF SUBSTANTIVE POINT RAISED BY LT.COL. SALIM ABDALLA AL-GHAZALI WAS POSSIBILITY OF US NAVY'S SENDING SMALL TEAM TO OMAN TO STUDY NEEDS OF OMANI NAVY IN TERMS OF EQUIPMENT AND ORGANIZATION FOR DEFENSE OF LONG COASTLINE. AL-GHAZALI STRESSED HE WAS RAISING MATTER UNOFFICIALLY, WITH INTENTION OF RECOMMENDING IDEA TO SULTAN ONLY IF USG AGREED TO CONSIDER SUCH REQUEST SYMPATHETICALLY.

2. AS EMBASSY IS AWARE, ARRIVAL OF SUCH MISSION IN
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OMAN, REGARDLESS HOW INNOCUOUS IT MIGHT BE MADE TO APPEAR,

WOULD HAVE IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH OMAN AS WELL AS FOR OUR REGIONAL ARMS TRANSFER POLICY. SHOULD OMANGOV RAISE MATTER YOU SHOULD MERELY SEEK WITHOUT COMMITMENT TO ASCERTAIN IN AS MUCH DETAIL AS POSSIBLE WHAT THEY HAVE IN MIND AND REPORT THIS WITH YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS. WHILE AL-GHAZALI DURING US TRIP MAY HAVE PRESUMED OUR WILLINGNESS TO PROVIDE A SURVEY TEAM, FINAL DECISION WILL

HAVE TO BE MADE ON BASIS OF BROAD POLICY CONSIDERATIONS ONCE THERE IS FIRM EVIDENCE THAT OMANGOV IS SERIOUS IN THIS INTEREST.

3. FYI: WE HAVE SUGGESTED TO AL-GHAZALI THAT HE DISCUSS HIS PROPOSAL WITH EMBASSY UPON HIS RETURN IN ORDER TO IDENTIFY PARAMETERS OF STUDY. WE ARE NOT RPT NOT PREPARED TO SAY IN ADVANCE WE WOULD SEND MISSION WITHOUT KNOWING MORE PRECISELY WHAT OMAN MAY HAVE IN MIND AND WHETHER IDEA ENJOYS FULL OMANGOV SUPPORT. END FYI.

4. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE AL-GHAZALI IS TALKING ABOUT "COAST GUARD" RATHER THAN "NAVY" CAPABILITY. IT MIGHT BE WELL TO ENCOURAGE HIM TO USE FORMER, MORE ACCURATE, TERM. ROBINSON

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